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ABSTRACT

This paper presents practical options for school development in relation to vocational education ranging from small and specific steps to larger whole school change. Chapter 1 describes the context. Chapter 2 highlights three interlocked imperatives to attain this objective: a comprehensive and well-structured educational program that deals centrally with issues of work from years 7-12; creation of community partnerships that are responsible for development of students and the community; and a partnership model for decision making about vocational education. Chapter 3 addresses work requirements nationally and locally. Chapter 4 reports student responses to the following: aspirations, information sources, student outcomes and post-year 12 destinations, destinations prior to end of year 12, the nature and purpose of learning and school responses on the nature of current practice and work-based education. Chapter 5 addresses alienation of young people from schooling and program targeting. Chapter 6 identifies four focus areas for curriculum development in schools: organization of teachers' work, students' work, and content and decision making about content and process and about purpose. Chapter 7 describes models: vocational education and training in senior education; industry-initiated and -resourced programs; enterprise education; integrating vocational learning into 7-12 curriculum/structure; and partial or targeted programs for at-risk students. Chapter 8 offers an audit tool to start discussions on priorities for change. Appendixes include materials from some models and 31 references. (YLB)

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Vocational Education

Options and Directions

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Vocational Education

Options and Directions

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Summary

This paper aims to present a brief and provocative overview of options in relation to vocational education in the Northern Metropolitan Region. While Vocational Education and Training (VET) is often considered solely within the context of year 11 and 12 courses and in relation to the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), it is argued here that vocational education must be considered in a broader context if it is to be effective. Some comments and arguments are also presented about the role of vocationalism within the purposes of schooling.

It is not intended to present a comprehensive history of VET here, nor to canvass all issues about implementation strategies and difficulties - many other papers have done that well. Rather this paper attempts to present some practical options for school development ranging from small and specific steps to larger whole school change. Finally, it presents an 'audit tool' that might be useful within some schools as a way of starting discussions on priorities for change.

1. The Context

1.1 The Economic Context

Heated discussions around issues of 'vocational and liberal studies' (Wirth, 1977) are not new to schools. From the establishment of public education in Australia, and certainly from formal debates documented since the beginning of this century, there has been much attention to arguments about the social role of education as transmitting or reforming social conditions.

However in the last 20-30 years, there has been increased and practical attention nationally and internationally to the relation between a general (sometimes liberal or academic) education and training.

There are various reasons for this: dramatic changes to the economic base of the country (including declines in primary and manufacturing industries); the impact of technological change on required skill levels, on work practices and on employment numbers; the consequent collapse of the full-time youth labour market and the growth in low-skill, short-term, part-time or casual jobs for young people (and others); the recognition of future employment uncertainty, and the need for flexible employment skills. These have all had huge implications for Australia's training needs and consequently for the role of schools.

Initial governmental program responses were seen as implying allocation of blame: community and school-based programs targeted perceived inadequacies in young people themselves, in their families, in their schools and in their teachers. At the same time, and more constructively, policies, programs and proposals have been developed that have attempted to institute large scale and fundamental changes to systems.

So, the national agenda is one of recognising that industry restructuring must be matched and underpinned by educational and training restructure. We hear that Australia must become smarter, more flexible, more qualified etc - the clever country.

At same time, huge adjustments have been made to the location and nature of training. It

has become located more in institutions rather than directly with employers, become more generic (and portable across sectors), become more organised, and become based on competencies (rather than on time served). The decline in numbers of apprenticeships has been noted, and responded to by the creation of new forms of full-time and part-time traineeships and apprenticeships - in wider fields than those traditionally targeted - which are seen as linking intellectual and manual learning through on-the-job and off-the-job training.

Paradoxically, as training needs within specific industries have become more specialised and structured, schools have been targeted with the responsibility for the development of the broad or generic training skills that are seen to underlie them.

The move of training responsibility away from specific industries has also been marked by a concern from industry over the nature of that training and a desire to maintain control over its content and standards. Thus formal processes have been established through Industry Training Boards for course development, accreditation and assessment. And, more recently, specific industries have been reasserting ownership of training processes and extending these, through accreditation and assessment procedures, into fields previously held to be the preserve of general education.

1.2 The School Context

Secondary schools are increasingly seen as having a vital role to play in the training agenda, partly as a consequence of increased retention of students within schools. Such retention (though now decreasing again) is seen as a product of the need for a skilled workforce for the clever country (the Finn Report, 1991, set a target of 95% of 19 year-olds to have "completed year 12, or an initial post-school qualification, or be participating in formally recognised education or training" by the year 2001), but also as a product of the collapse of youth labour market and a consequent growth in credentialism as a sorting mechanism for scarcer positions.

Yet, when the consequences of such views are developed within secondary education, it is clear that they enter into an arena of contested views and arguments about the legitimate role of secondary education. What role does education play to transmit or challenge social structures? Should secondary schools be concerned with providing a general or vocational educational focus? What is the role of education as a sorting and credentialling mechanism for further education, training and work? How do such ideas relate to ideals of empowerment, liberation and democracy?

The response from some students who are now in schools also points to issues about the control of curriculum directions in terms of their academic outcomes (including the domination of senior courses by university entry requirements): their expression of dissatisfaction and resistance (Thomson, 1997) and the responsive growth in 'alternative programs' stressing hands-on and practical, pre-apprenticeship type approaches, is indicative of continued uncertainties about appropriate directions for secondary education.

An uneasy compromise in the general/vocational argument has been a focus on the provision of vocational education and training within the senior or post-compulsory years. When one talks about vocational education, it's almost universally assumed that what one means is 'VET in Schools' or similar programs. There has certainly been a broad growth of programs in these senior areas, but with at times contradictory marketing intentions that have variously focused on the appropriateness of these courses for:

- all students;
- students who are not succeeding academically;
- students who are succeeding and want a 10% boost to their TER scores;
- students with specific employment interests.

There have, of course, been examples of vocational education in other areas of the school, and using other models, and some of these will be outlined later in this paper.

However, in the Northern Region it is reported that there is an actual decline in student uptake of VET in Schools courses. It appears that uptake of VET in Schools programs is significantly lower in the Northern Region, in

comparison to that in other Regions. Even if this decline is shown to be illusory (and it seems that decreased numbers can at least in part be explained by specific courses not running because of internal organisational impediments: a need for adequate student numbers, in which an 'all or nothing' approach develops), there are also anecdotal accounts of resistance from students, parents and staff members that means that the expected enthusiasm isn't there.

1.3 The Context of Resistance

Why this resistance?

Traditionally, suspicion of VET by parents and students is seen as a product of long-standing and positive (even if erroneous) perceptions of the outcomes of a broad and general education, in which a 'better life' will be delivered through university-based studies which lead towards a profession.

For teachers, various factors have been pointed to: a lack of understanding of what VET courses entail, threats to their own subject areas (students are seen as scarce resources), or a concern with a 'core business' of teaching students, rather than specific skills or courses (despite contradictory claims from some primary school teachers). "In schools, teachers teach students; in the training system, trainers deliver programs." (Anwyl, 1994) While all of these factors have been uncovered within recent studies (including current research on VET in small rural schools), there are also other issues.

Underlying both of these sets of arguments is a concern of people being in a responsive position. Thomson (1997) has pointed to the suspicion of teachers of 'outside courses' with intentions, content and methodology developed elsewhere. "What may seem to be teachers' rejection or subversion of the vocational agenda is more aptly described as resistance to courses over which they have little control, and which they would wish to see considerably changed." While similar concerns have been held for a long time around the control of senior secondary courses, there has at least been a recognition that decision-making imperatives come from educationists and that teachers are, to varying degrees, involved with the course construction process. However, as Anwyl (1994) notes about the adjustments to structures and content of training and post-compulsory education:

"While the debate has been spasmodic, it has been led by government, industry and unions, rather than educationists themselves."

This has resulted in a situation of students, parents and teachers being **sold to**, rather than **developed with**. Anwyl again notes: "This has led governments to promote the value of vocational training for school leavers, partly to moderate the high demand for university places, but also to change the perceptions among students and their parents that Technical and Further Education (TAFE) is a second rate destination."

The culture of schools hasn't changed from inside; it sees itself as under attack and persuasion from outside.

1.4 General/Vocational Context

To simply see some subjects as vocational and others as general is perhaps not a useful

distinction, for that simplicity obscures ways in which all subjects are approached: what is regarded as the driving purpose of teaching and learning in that subject area.

It is more valuable to talk then about the approaches adopted by schools as 'vocationalist' or 'generalist'. The former approach stresses the primacy of the market value of all subjects (we could say it sees both English and Auto as vocational subjects) and particularly limits vocational subjects to the skills and knowledge required for successful market participation (Carr and Hartnett, 1996). The latter approach is directed towards the development of the person for participation in social life (Apple and Beane, 1995) and argues that vocational subjects include a reflective and critical understanding of the world of work.

In summary:

	Vocationalist approach	Generalist approach
General subjects	Provides knowledge and skills required for specific further and higher learning	Development of mind for participation in social life
Vocational subjects	Provides knowledge and skills required for successful market participation	Development of critical understanding of nature, context and values of the world of work

Drawing on Carr and Hartnett (1996), Thomson (1997) points to some characteristics of each of these approaches, which are further outlined in Appendix 1.

Thomson argues that teachers, operating within a generalist approach, do not reject work or vocational education, but see such education as going beyond the achievement of training competencies directed at current market needs. In particular, as industry predicts (and possibly demands) that work becomes increasingly casualised and uncertain, she argues that vocational competencies that simply customise young people for this world of work, will be unacceptable within schools.

The debate therefore is not about whether education should prepare students for either public life or work, but whether education should respond to the current political demands to reproduce the particular world of work on which recent educational changes have been erected and legitimised... that is,

move from the generalist paradigm to the vocationalist, and from a long term holistic to a short term 'supply' perspective of work." (Thomson, 1997)

In practice, these two approaches tend to overlap and elements of each appear in successful school programs. What schools do is to reach an accommodation between them. The Finn Report (1991) argued "that these two approaches needed to be brought together both for the sake of individuals and for the economy generally. It argued that schools needed to be concerned with employability, and that the vocational sector needed to be concerned with more general, broader vocational education" (Gonczi, 1996).

It is suggested that the ways in which vocational education is seen within schools in the Northern Region must acknowledge both the generalist and the vocationalist approaches, and attempt to be responsive to

the broad range of student and community needs. Such an approach would have, at its core, the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are needed for creation of a productive community. Work is seen as one of the central parts of that community.

A new approach to education that combines the vocational and the general would include the following:

- A range of subjects which would develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for full and active social participation, and all of which include both participation in and critique of useful and fulfilling work.
- These subjects would be centred on ideas of curriculum relevance, enterprise, participation, and collaboration.
- The school organisation would be democratic and participatory, self-managing, equitable and linked to its whole community.
- The organisation of the curriculum would be based on students' personal, community and vocational needs. That might mean a degree of curriculum integration, but also with subject differentiation as required according to learning tasks. There would be a weak division between the classroom, community and world of work.
- Curriculum knowledge would value being critical, culturally aware, practical and applied. Knowledge and skills would be valued for their social use.
- Assessment would use a variety of processes, but primarily would emphasise the demonstration of broad competencies in authentic situations.
- The teacher's role would be as the organiser of learning and facilitator of a variety of authentic assessment tasks.
- Teaching methods would include a variety of approaches, including practical instruction and application, self-paced learning, group tasks, collaborative enquiry and authentic project tasks.

The educational approach would be responsive to the nature of the tasks in the community and directed towards the developing of community. It would be continually exploring questions: 'what needs to be done?' 'what is of worth?' 'what skills are needed?' It would deal

directly with issues of the capacity and willingness of people to act around issues that affect them.

The definition of generic competencies (see section 3) raises substantial questions for schools in the education of all students. If the requirements for educating students to be living within an increasingly complex society, and of working within increasingly flexible workplaces are to be met by schools, how do the practices of current general and vocational areas measure up. Not well, suggest various commentators:

The content of education needs to concentrate on developing for the whole cohort, higher-education capacities of the type traditionally reserved for the elite, and usually developed through general education. In the new era workplace, according to Resnick (1987), there is the need for increased judgement and analysis of complex situations according to multiple criteria. The task for workers is to construct meaning and develop frameworks to explain particular situations. If this is true, teachers of traditional general education need to consider how well it actually develops these capacities. To what extent do the traditional subjects and the ways they are taught develop this judgement and this capacity to solve problems? The implications for vocational education are equally serious. Is vocational education sufficiently 'general' to develop the capacities needed in the new economy? (Gonczi, 1996)

Sweet (1995) suggests that, as issues of what is 'general' and what is 'vocational' become intertwined, so do ideas of work and community development:

We can profitably invert the traditional relationship between theory and practice, between concept and experience, between the classroom and the world outside it, to provide students with rich and powerful learning - with a high quality, broad education that has both general and vocational elements inextricably intertwined, including learning from the world outside the confines of the classroom as well as from within it.

Work is central to this definition of an active community; vocational education is central to this definition of schools. The approach to work is concerned both with questions such as:

- what career will I have? what training do I need? and
- what sort of work do we want in our society? how can we create full and valued employment?

Practical examples of this approach to learning are already found in programs within

this Region and elsewhere and some of the examples provided later in the paper illustrate aspects. They have in common a basis in ideas of how students learn, and of students as partners in purposeful learning.

Other examples have been documented elsewhere under the titles of 'authentic learning and assessment' (eg the Coalition of Essential Schools, the work of TheodoreSizer), in the growing Australian literature on successful middle school programs (ACSA), in approaches to Community Based Learning (Cumming), and in documentation of many student participation projects and approaches (eg Holdsworth, 1998).

1.6 This Paper

This paper therefore argues that there are three interlocked **imperatives** in the development of vocational education within schools:

1. We must take a broader and more structured view of **vocational education across the curriculum** in looking at its role across all year levels and across all key learning areas. Curriculum approaches must be reflective, investigative, active, critical, and preparatory (see section 2.1);
2. We must take a broader view of the **role of schools in partnership with their local communities** in creating authentic learning environments and opportunities that also encompasses community and work development (see section 2.2); and
3. We must take a broader view of the **process of development of vocational education in schools**. This process must see schools (teachers, students, parents) working locally with training organisations, industry and the local community (local government, community groups etc) to invent and own these approaches within contexts that are supported by all parties (see section 2.3).

2. Imperatives for a VET Curriculum

2.1 The Place of Work Across the Curriculum

The first imperative identified is for a comprehensive and well-structured educational program that deals centrally with issues of work from year 7 to 12. What might such a program look like?

For a start, the program would be **planned**. It would be reflected in the School Charter as a priority; it would have a developing curriculum structure; it would identify implications for various subject areas. It would ask every subject area (be that discipline based or thematic) to plan for ways in which work was both overtly and implicitly addressed. It would look for ways in which overlapping approaches could be integrated and ways in which gaps could be addressed.

The planned program would also indicate the ways in which ideas of our relation to work developed and grew as students progressed through the school.

Secondly, learning would be based in **reflective action**. It would ask every subject area to indicate how the dichotomies between 'knowing how' and 'knowing that' (which have been embedded in educational practices) were being broken down. It would build in hands-on, productive learning methods, and structures to support reflection on practical learning. It would ask that both action and reflection be written into subject outlines.

Thirdly, assessment would be related to **demonstrated outcomes and evidence of competencies**.

Competency-based approaches, particularly as they relate to assessment, require a movement away from practices based on a measurement paradigm. Instead they need to move toward a performance/evidence-based assessment paradigm which relies on teacher judgements in far more explicit ways than has been the case in general education. (Goncz, 1996)

Junior Secondary

In the year 7 and 8 level, negotiated curriculum approaches advocated initially by James

Beane are now being developed in various parts of Australia, and linked with the experience of many local schools in senior (eg STC) courses. This form of curriculum negotiation is based around student generation of issues from the coincidence of their questions about self and society.

The experience in several schools has been that work-related aspects are almost certain to emerge either explicitly, or are closely embedded in student questions. The activities that result from the process might be as specific as a study in response to the question "what sort of job will I have?" (students investigate the range of local jobs, read about job vacancy areas, interview local businesses, survey the 'main street', both in terms of businesses represented, and/or for perception of trends etc) or might include curricula in which students 'track' parents relatives through a workday.

Studies might also include community investigations (see Appendix 2: Holdsworth, R: **A Suggested Work Education Program**) that seek to define community needs that go beyond employment, or have students undertaking community-based work. In fact, we may find that the nature of particular curriculum projects differs little from those currently offered within schools at this level, but that the intent and possibly the methods change, as this is seen as part of a larger study.

Middle Secondary

In the middle years of the secondary school, issues of being enterprising arise. This occurs both in terms of the establishment of small business-related initiatives by students and in more general terms of the ways in which projects and other learning areas are tackled: 'what new possibilities can be invented?'. Community based learning approaches become more even more important in these levels, as students undertake community research projects, produce forms of community media, carry out work of community service, or teach/train/tutor other students.

Some of this is explicitly related to work issues. For example students at this level

might follow-up previous cohorts of school leavers to investigate destinations, pathways and satisfaction. The results of such investigations are brought back to the classroom for discussion and further learning.

Many schools teach around 'life skills' at this level, including career investigation as part of that study. While such approaches are valuable, perhaps the artificial separation of this implies that other subject areas have no responsibility to look at their contribution to the skills that students need in their communities.

At this stage, the formal investigation of work also focuses on periods of work experience, which are integrated into studies as a process of investigation rather than simply 'work sampling'. (Cole, 1981) This implies increased planning and preparation of students in terms of definitions of their goals, of their own investigation and establishment of work placement possibilities, reflection during the work experience, formal individual and group de-briefing and further goal planning. While there are important organisational reasons for coordinating work experience periods, other possibilities (eg one day a week for a term) would also be considered.

Senior Secondary

In the senior years, students would undertake much more formal focused work investigations increasingly related to their own exploration of careers and further education/training. They would be supported to define the skills and credentials they need to enter on particular paths of further study, training or work, and to plan courses accordingly. This might involve arrangement of visits to workplaces and to tertiary courses for interviews, and opportunities to report the results of these investigations to a broader group of students within the school or within the community.

A range of formal VET options would provide different structures of part-time work and part-time schooling. Options for creating work as part of studies would also exist. Students would have different ways of seeing themselves as worker or student (eg through New Apprenticeship Programs).

Orientations both to community based studies and to the investigative role of work

placements would continue from years 10 and 11.

2.2 The Place of Work Across the Community

The second imperative is for the creation of community partnerships that take responsibility both for the development of students and for the development of the community (including the needs of its industries). Drawing on Scandinavian models (most extant in legislative requirements on local government in Sweden and Norway which mandate responsibility for guaranteeing young people access to education, training or work), Sweet (1995) notes that "... it works well mainly because of the close connections that exist at the local level between teachers, students and firms ..."

As well as focusing on work issues, such partnerships would also be located in broader community needs and issues. Schools would work locally with local government, industry, community groups etc to define work needed in the area, the nature of skills to be developed, resources able to be offered by groups, possibilities for youth enterprise, and avenues for authentic learning. Rather than schools regarding the community as a passive resource that students 'raid' (a creek to be measured, people to be interviewed, shops to be looked at), a productive partnership would define mutual needs, interests and resources.

Such partnerships would be seen as beneficial to schools both in provision of resources (eg work placements) and in enhancing student learning. Recent research indicates that many students learn best in authentic settings and undermines the view that there is necessarily a separation between knowing and doing.

Not only is it increasingly being recognised that the workplace is a powerful site for learning, but as Kovacs (1986) suggests, work can be a vehicle for the creation of selfhood and of forming and transforming the world. (Goncz, 1996)

In 'problem based education' real-life situations, or situations which simulate real life, become the curriculum in which students, working cooperatively, and tackling one problem at a time, are supported to clarify and deal with these problems. The similarities of such approaches to those specified in competency based learning have been

identified, but are driven here by best learning practice rather than by training requirements.

For general education, it raises the possibility of employing an apprenticeship approach to develop cognitive competencies. For vocational education, which has long used such models to develop narrow vocational competencies, it raises the possibility of broadening the curriculum to include concepts which can be used in other contexts and which enhance adaptability. (Gonczi, 1996)

Such community or problem based learning approaches would also seek to engage students in the definition and design of the learning. Fletcher (1991) describes "... experiences that break the traditional academic model of student as passive receiver of knowledge and place students in situations in which they are active participants in their own development..."

There are also strong benefits for local communities in such partnerships, both in terms of influencing training directions and in gaining access to community workers. In addition, there are less tangible benefits of trust and support:

Firms get to know and to trust the schools, students tailor their efforts and expectations according to those of the firms that are closely linked to the school, firms trust the grades that teachers give to students, and accordingly give the students jobs.... It is also clear that employers recognise that such courses improve students' attitudes, values and maturity, their ability to apply knowledge, their future productivity, and their self-esteem and motivation. (Sweet, 1995)

A first step in this imperative is identification of partners, the formation of discussion forums aimed at defining benefits and possibilities, and the establishment of appropriate formal structures.

In turn, there will be implications for school and curriculum structures, and perhaps the necessity for increased flexibility in organisational arrangements:

There is anecdotal evidence that the discipline-based structures in schools and the timetabling based on short periods militate against better cooperative arrangements between the sectors. (Gonczi, 1996)

Examples both in this area and elsewhere have been cited at Salisbury (SA) and in emerging discussions around the City of Darebin and the Shire of Whittlesea.

2.3 The Process of Curriculum Decision Making and Development

The third imperative is for a partnership model for decision making about vocational education. This is implicit in comments above, but again mirrors the Scandinavian experience in which localities are required to take responsibility for all young people in an area.

The process of formation of directions is as important as the resolution reached. As noted earlier, suspicion by teachers, students and parents about VET, reflects as much a process of exclusion from the process of formation of options, as lack of knowledge or rejection of the options themselves.

That does not simply mean a series of forums, debates and working parties. The suggestions made above for planned curriculum development around work issues throughout the school, and of community-based partnerships, will generate the on-going engagement with the issues that will form options. They must, however, be mirrored both by the opportunities for reflection on programs and formal avenues for shared decision making.

By engaging in a curriculum process of investigating work, of thinking about applications, of experiencing consequences in real settings, and of being asked to invent personal and community solutions, students are being brought directly into a process in which they are also forming further curriculum options.

Such a process is also applicable for parents and teachers, as the process plans how to bring them actively into forming educational directions. For teachers in particular, the construction of a work-focused curriculum must be seen as an empowering process that enables them to:

- choose from VET offerings already available; or
- create and teach their own options.

But it may also need a new process of planning. The Audit tool attached provides one such possibility for supporting a process in which various members of the school community re-assess the priorities and directions for vocational and general education in the school.

The role of a strong and inclusive leadership team is vital. Such a team does not need to see its role as 'selling' VET to a resistant school community, but rather one of developing informed community decision-making partnerships in a continually reviewing and renewing vocational education.

Successful and growing VET practice has been marked by a school community that is confident in its educational leadership within a local partnership of respect.

Schools are not simply passive in the face of external pressures for them to change. They, and the leadership that they can exert in their local communities, can make the real difference. (Sweet, 1995)

3. Work Requirements

3.1 What is being said nationally

As outlined above, national industry spokespersons have argued that the schooling and training systems have failed to develop in students the skills that are needed for the high-skill workplaces of the 1990s. As a result of this concern, various Ministerial Committees have tried to identify the competencies that bring together individual, industry and societal needs (Gonczi, 1996). **Competency** has been defined as the capacity to apply knowledge and skill in an integrated way in work situations (Mayer, 1992).

Gonczi then points out that competency-based education rests on three principles:

- education is based on outcomes (what students can do as well as what they know);
- outcomes are based on standards (developed by the industry with unions and government participating); and
- assessment is based on competencies to confirm that the outcomes have been achieved.

The Finn Review (1991) recommended that there were competency areas that all young people need for employment. These were:

- language and communication;
- mathematical and technological understanding;
- cultural understanding;
- interpersonal; and
- problem solving.

These were further developed by the Carmichael Report (1992), that suggested that key competencies could provide a link between general education and VET through changes to industry certification.

The Mayer Report (1993) developed these areas into seven key or generic competencies. These are:

- collecting, analysing and organising ideas and information;
- communicating ideas and information;

- planning and organising activities;
- working with others in teams;
- using mathematical ideas and techniques;
- solving problems;
- using technology.

It is considered that these competencies are needed to enable people "to participate effectively in the emerging forms of work and work organisation. They focus on the capacity to apply knowledge and skills in an integrated way in work situations." (Mayer, 1992) For education, there would be less attention to 'time spent at school' and more on the notion of developing competencies. In Victoria, the emphasis on 'outcomes' in the CSF is seen as part of that general trend. Internationally, similar trends have stressed the generic nature of competencies: "We are not calling for a narrow, work-focused education. Our future demands more." (US Department of Labour, 1991)

The Karpin Report (1996) identified the role of schools in the development of an enterprising culture within formal education and training. This would involve the formal education system being used to expose students at primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary levels of education to the value of enterprising and entrepreneurial behaviour, and to provide units in entrepreneurship and small business formation and management in vocational and professional courses. Salisbury High School in South Australia is one example of a school which has taken up the challenge of developing an enterprise culture. Their enterprise direction is based around achieving success in ten focus areas, which include enterprising curriculum, industry-school partnerships and workplace learning. (See information contained at: <http://www.nexus.edu.au/ems/enterprise/fabout.htm> - and further details included later in this paper.)

3.2 Competencies interpreted locally

At a regional level, the Northern Area Consultative Committee (NACC; Reg Poole,

Executive Officer) links industry management with adult education, DETYA, community services, Employment National and Group Training.

In the Northern Region the major employers are in areas of manufacturing, retail, construction, education, health and community services. Manufacturing has declined, especially in the clothing, footwear and textile industries, but there have been increasing opportunities in the retail sector.

The nature of the 'competencies' interpreted by industry through the NACC and its reference committees, while based on the Mayer competencies, emphasise the need for potential employees to have:

- the right attitude;
- enthusiasm; and
- an ability to communicate.

Employees become progressively more employable as their skills develop and as they develop the generic competencies such as problem solving. These employers are saying that as long as the potential employees have these initial capabilities then the employers will teach the specific skills associated with particular industries.

There are only limited opportunities for job seekers without skills as a result of the major restructuring of the manufacturing and other industry that occurred in the 1980s. This resulted in a 'lean and skilled workforce', as confirmed through interviews with local employers in specialised engineering and electronics industries. While they were able to take on work placements for schools, the human resources managers commented that due to the small size of their companies when they were employing staff, they could only take on highly skilled staff: it was necessary for the staff to be able to be productive from the beginning of their employment (Interviews, 1998). It is therefore probably unlikely that students' work placements would provide a step towards long-term employment in those particular industries.

3.3 Prospects of local industry

At present there are persistent skill shortages in the Northern region in the areas of engineering, metal fabrication and engineering. These areas experience a lack of adequately

trained local labour. This has been exacerbated in past years by the weakness of the links between employers, training providers and job seekers (NACC, 1998). The NACC, the Darebin Consortium and other local government/industry/school groups in Whittlesea and Moreland have been established to try to provide the links between these groups.

Many of the previously existing repetitious and unskilled jobs have been automated; while there are still specific skills needed (such as the welding of aluminium) there are also broader based skills that underlie these specific skills, such as design, ordering and the marketing of products. Where VET was once seen as part of a system which taught very specific skills, it is now required to teach a broader range of skills to equip school leavers for a changing workplace where only a small amount of time may be spent using the specific skills.

At present, school leavers from the region are frequently portrayed by local employers as not having the requisite basic training or generic skill levels. They are also seen as having attitudes that are not conducive to successfully gaining and keeping employment in the area (NACC, 1998; interviews with employers, 1998).

Faced on the one hand with local responses stating very specific skill needs, and with industry boards on the other hand that emphasise broad-based skills, many schools experience a level of confusion as to industry expectations of school leavers. While some industries recognise the need for training in higher order capacities among their workforce, others are still reliant on repetitious mass production.

Bengtsson (1993) has developed a three phase framework for firms involved in training:

- Phase one: training is product specific;
- Phase two: training is more closely related to the need for multi skilling and flexibility;
- Phase three: the relationship between learning and the product (either goods or services) narrows. Learning becomes a part of all production decisions and is concerned with problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills.

Gonczi (1996) notes: "It is a moot point as to where the majority of firms in Australia fit in this framework and, therefore, what skills they would need of their workforce. However, clearly, there are a lot who have not reached phase three."

The need to move to phase two and three is necessary when looking at increasing productivity in firms. If the productive time spent by employees is only 20% of their work time with the other 80% being spent getting materials to be productive then it is important to empower workers to be multiskilled so that the workers can change the time that they spend productively (Reg Poole interview, 1998).

There are implications for both generalist and vocationalist education approaches to be drawn from these changes to the economy and the restructuring of the industry sector. It is now necessary for the schools operating within a generalist approach to consider how well competencies in the areas of problem solving and the analysis of ideas and information are catered for within their teaching methodologies and curriculum. It is equally necessary for schools within a vocationalist approach to consider whether the vocational education they offer is directed to develop these broader competencies (Gonczi, 1996).

4. Regional Practices and Perspectives

In this section, we turn to responses collected on visits to schools in the Northern Metropolitan Region. The schools visited were Box Forest, Bundoora, Epping, Merrilands, Mill Park, Reservoir District, St Helena and Whittlesea Secondary Colleges.

4.1 Student responses

The following student responses came from interviews with year 9, 10 and 11 students in small focus groups, at Reservoir District, Whittlesea, Merrilands, Epping and Box Forest Secondary Colleges.

4.1.1 Aspirations

In many cases the students had a clear and definite idea of a future career that they would like to pursue. Not surprisingly, these ideas were more formed amongst the year 10 and 11 students; however, a substantial minority of students, even in the year 11 groups said they had no clear idea of future career areas. The aspirations of the students showed a broad spread of careers, including:

the girls: travel agent, secretarial work, hospitality, nursing, child care, law clerk, lawyer, teacher, beauty technician, small business, flight attendant, optometry, police force, performing arts, retail work, animal work, and army (nurse);

the boys: building, chef, art teacher, fitter and turner, mechanic, park ranger, computers, sport related, security, cabinet maker, car sales, accounting, engineering, bank manager, marketing and business.

Where they had a clear idea of a future career, many also had specific information about the training or further education implications involved.

4.1.2 Where students draw information from

Many of the students responded that they had selected career paths with ideas gained from outside the school, eg from family, friends or media images. Some of the students had then found the information provided at the school to be helpful, but few pointed to a formal process within schools that assisted them to explore and establish directions.

The support information within schools had been gained in both structured and unstructured ways. Some students reported on work education units as part of the SOSE curriculum at year 10. In some schools this is linked with preparations of the students for work experience; such work experience was seen as having a direct relationship to the career in which they were interested. This focused exploration of a particular job seemed to be a positive factor for the students who were able to do it and, for many of the students, work experience had helped them decide whether they would want to pursue a particular career. For some it had been a negative experience, and that had clarified options: a few year 11 boys had decided that a mechanic's job was not for them, as it was 'far too oily and greasy' - they were now looking for other jobs in the automotive industry. One girl had undertaken work experience in several different areas in which she was interested (hairdressing and childcare) and has used that experience to decide on a preference for childcare.

For other students, work experience was not linked to a future career but rather an opportunity to find part time work (eg in a large retail store). Their experience had both positive and negative aspects: while they may have gained a part time job, they also found the work so boring and with such long hours that the experience convinced them to stay at school in order to achieve a more interesting job.

Most of the schools had some form of career counselling, but students often saw this as a passive and informal avenue for advice and support. All students knew that they could go to the careers teacher for information, but few had, in fact, initiated such approaches on

their own. If they had had an interview with the careers teacher it had been on a more formal basis, either as part of a year 10 program in which all students had interviews before VCE subject selection or as part of the process of selecting a VET program.

In the cases where students had selected a VET program in year 11, it seemed that these students had a greater awareness of the pathways that the program would offer them and greater contact with the careers teacher or counselling.

Year 9 students often had less information and less experience of careers advice. Some year 9 students expressed a wish for more information about careers and pathways at that level to help them select electives for year 10. There appeared to be a link between the clarity of student career aspirations at year 9 with the degree of uptake of VET courses in the school as a whole. In one school with a strong VET focus and culture, and with a limited number of students also accessing VET courses at year 10, there was a clear indication by the year 9 students as to what their future career preferences were. This was particularly strong in the boys. One, who wanted to be a chef, had written his resume with help of the computer teacher and had sent it to industries in the area that would give him appropriate work experience. He gave the rest of the focus group a lesson on how they should write their resume and organise themselves for their career. Both the opportunity to develop this process, and the clarity of the student's perceived options, link strongly with the increasing number of students in that school now taking TAFE courses at the end of year 12. In 1997, close to 50% of the exiting cohort were selecting TAFE courses after year 12 completion.

However, at another school the opposite seemed to be occurring, although there was a similar outcome at the end of year 12 with around 40% of students accessing TAFE. Here, the students at both years 9 and 10 had very little idea of future directions and were not aware of the range of options offered through VET. The students, in fact, expressed a view that to take VET would **narrow** their options and that they were better served by completing a general VCE. They felt that they could gain the skills that employers wanted such as communication through completing a good VCE and would then have broader options. Although there was a full time careers

position at this school, a range of VET options presented that related to student interest areas (eg Sport and Recreation - football), and TAFE Tasters organised for the year 10 students, these initiatives had not translated into students taking up VET courses.

At a third secondary college, information presented on the New Apprenticeship Program (NAP) had had a positive impact on student interest. From 20 interested students, discussions narrowed the group to 10 students, and there were finally three selected by employers in the IT area for the program. There was some disappointment expressed within the school that only three students were finally selected through an interviewing process that was controlled by employers from the industry.

A fourth school had developed a fortnightly home-group class, starting at year 7, as a self-improvement session that explicitly looked at what the students wanted to be. This had been in operation for the past two years; there appeared to be a positive difference in the knowledge and confidence about future careers of the students at year 10 who had been involved with this program in comparison with the year 11 students who had not.

4.1.3 Student outcomes, post year 12 destinations

Some of the schools in the region attempt to track both the students who leave at the end of year 12 and earlier school leavers. Many reported difficulties (particularly resource related) in extending this beyond the immediate destinations on leaving. Reservoir District SC has established a Job Club for year 12 students who are not applying to TAFE or University and also tries to keep in contact with students who leave in earlier years until the students are in a 'safe place' or involved in a course.

The selection of universities by the students in the Northern Region was determined both by their TER score and by locality of courses. From the east to the centre of the Northern Region, students tended to go to LaTrobe University with a smaller number going to RMIT, while students from the west of the Region are more likely to attend VUT. There were similar patterns with TAFE attendance, with students selecting to go to Northern TAFE and Kangan Batman for those further to the west.

With particular courses at Universities now taking students with relatively low TER scores, University is now an option for many of the students in the region who satisfactorily complete year 12. For some students, the question facing them is one of where a particular University course will lead, rather than simply seeing University in preference to TAFE. Teese, Davies, Charlton and Polesel (1995) discuss this question in relation to girls' curriculum decisions within schools and the implication of this for their post compulsory pathways. "Relegation to non-science programs within the secondary school is more commonly the fate of girls. Their more liberal subject selections mask vocational weakness and their access to a range of post school courses is poorer. Though girls complete school and also enter university more often, this is at a price."

Teachers in many of the schools reported that student interest in TAFE had increased over the past five years and that TAFE will now be put ahead of University as a first option by some students. TAFE was viewed as a realistic choice by many of the students and teachers.

4.1.4 Destinations prior to end of year 12

Less information is available about students who left school prior to year 12. The students interviewed felt that the majority of these students who had not gone to another school were boys; they thought they had gone to TAFE, to apprenticeships or had some sort of part-time work. Teese et al (1995) describe "jobs at the end of school are more often seen as available by boys who are failing at school - and least often by boys who are successful."

One school provided data from their Triennial Review which emphasizes how a "strong pathways approach in both counseling and actual programs produces significant outcomes for the students" (Epping SC, 1998). The school has a retention rate of 65% for students completing year 12, which is 16% below the state benchmark. If the students that either moved into further education, training or full time employment were added to the number who completed VCE, the actual retention rate would be 86% (Epping SC, 1998). The school asserts that: "The system judges retention rates on completion of year 12. The system does not appear to recognise legitimate pathways for the students who may not have the inclination or ability to complete their year 12, but opt to

take a pathway into education and training that better suits their needs." (Epping SC, 1998)

Another school also with a strong vocational focus had a similar trend. Of the students commencing year 12, 21% did not complete the year. Of these students, 30% moved to further education and training and 35% went into employment.

In both schools the percentages for TAFE and university were similar. In one school, of the students completing year 12, around 30-40% go to university, 40-50% attend TAFE and approximately 20% have or are seeking employment. In the other school, around 50% of students go to TAFE, while around 35% go to university.

In another school, the transition rate for years 10 to 11 was around 95% but this percentage decreased for years 11 to 12. 159 students had started year 11 and 104 students had indicated that they would be starting year 12. While some of these students were going to TAFE because they believed it would better help them get a job, others were dropping out to nothing or insecure part-time employment.

Both the schools, which have increasing numbers in their VET courses, felt that this had been a significant factor in providing their students with a pathway either during year 12 or at the end of year 12. Whittlesea SC comments that a "large number of students (28%) chose a TAFE hospitality course with a further two students taking up a Chef apprenticeship. The school felt the supporting VET courses and links with the local TAFEs appeared to have correctly anticipated their students' needs." (Whittlesea, 1998)

4.1.5 The nature and purpose of learning - student engagement

The overwhelming initial response by students when asked why they went to school was instrumental: "you need to go to school to get a job." When asked for other reasons, some responded that they liked to be with their friends at school (to socialise), while a few talked of broader issues such as 'understanding the world'. The puzzlement of students seemed to indicate that issues around the purpose of education were either obvious - or a non-question!

Whether the students enjoyed a particular class depended, in part, on the relationships built with the teacher. Positive factors mentioned were:

- if the teacher could 'take a joke';
- whether the teacher explained the work thoroughly;
- whether there was discussion among the class before having to do written work.

Frequently, students reported that they did not feel challenged by the curriculum. Australian History was given as an example in a number of cases where the students felt that they had been doing the same content in the same way since primary school: they went to the library to get the information for their projects. Information Technology was also given as an example where students did not feel that their experience outside school (at home or with friends) was being utilised in the classroom to allow them to do more challenging work.

While most of the focus groups found the assignment work and large amounts of handouts boring, there was one focus group of predominantly year ten boys who said they preferred handouts as it allowed them to work at their own pace. A large number of the students were interested in a curriculum that started from questions that they wanted to ask and found interesting rather than a curriculum that consisted of what had to be taught. (For more details, see Models 7.4: Integrating Vocational Learning, The Grange SC).

4.2 School responses

4.2.1 The nature of current practice

Most of the schools visited had some sort of subschool structure in place. Patterns varied: a number of 'vertical' subschools from year 7-10 plus a senior subschool; or 'horizontal' Senior, Middle and Junior subschools. All schools said that they tried to have teachers located as much as possible in one subschool, depending on the subjects taught, with specialist teachers having to teach outside one subschool more often. One school also had a year 7 program where the same teachers would teach the students for as many classes as possible eg maths/science and English/SOSE. (See the Models 7.4 Team Small Groups (TSG) model at The Grange - outlined below - for an alternative structure.)

In one school the year 11 focus group found the change from year 10 to 11 a big leap. The big leap was related to the change in structure of the curriculum from year 10 to VCE with its work requirements and assessment tasks. The school now has assessment tasks and work requirements starting at year 7 and the year 10 focus group who were already familiar with this structure were not as concerned about the leap to year 11.

Many of the schools have found that retention has been a problem at year 10 and throughout year 11. A number of the schools are starting or are already running programs that target 'at risk' year 9 and 10 students to be part of a program that will maintain them through to year 11. In some schools the programs run at year 10 and in other schools the programs run at year 11.

One example of this is the **Pathways Program**, in which students attend school for four days a week and do one day a week of work placement, which is competency based. In a move away from the traditional curriculum, a team of teachers takes the 20 identified students for all of their year 10 subjects. (Other programs such as the Whittlesea Enterprise Program and the Epping VPP Program are outlined later in Models.)

Another school that does not run a specific program is considering a competency based approach in the Automotive subjects for years 9 and 10, but while the teachers are interested to take the competency-based modules to other years of schooling, they are unsure as to how it would fit in with the CSF. There was interest as to how to embed the key competencies within the 7-10 curriculum but the schools interviewed were not as yet doing that.

It would seem to be a valuable further exercise for the Region to map the CSF and the key competencies against each other.

It would also be valuable to map intentions and activities within some possible community based learning projects against both the CSF and the key competencies.

4.2.2 Work based education

In no school was a comprehensive year 7-12 work education program in evidence. There were elements that could fit into such a program, but neither students nor teachers reported about a structure that developed over the years, or in which work experience was seen to be an integrated event.

Several schools were reported to have a unit of work within the SOSE curriculum called 'life skills', 'work education' or 'careers' that leads into the student's VCE choice, work experience and in some cases the development of a student portfolio. In one school the home group program starting at year 7 (for one period per fortnight) was identified by the students as an important way that they gained information about work and careers and also engaged in personal development activities.

Apart from these examples, and the operation of work experience on a 'sampling' model, schools' attention to VET was almost solely restricted to VCE Industry and Enterprise and to a range of VET program at years 11 and 12. One school was offering one of their VET programs to a selected number of year 10 students.

One school wants to develop VET at years 10 and 11 so as to allow the students additional time in year 12 for completion of Common Assessment Tasks (CATs). While this could be a positive option for some schools, it also reinforces the notion that "VET subjects take time away from the core VCE subjects". One principal aimed to have a VET subject available for every student in the school. These would be linked with the VCE and further studies; an example given was that, for students wanting to take science at university, Certificate II in Laboratory Studies would give them a head start for part time work while they were at university.

The course development model has generally been that schools have developed or chosen the subjects, offered them to students and then students have selected courses on the basis of present or future interest. The schools with technical facilities and trained staff were able to offer the largest range of courses on site, while other schools accessed TAFE for the facilities and training that the school couldn't offer. Some clustering to increase the number of possible courses is planned and, in 1999, a wider range of VET subjects will be offered by a

cluster of five school in the Northern region (see Models for descriptions).

A number of the schools were looking at the New Apprenticeship Program (NAP). Though in its infancy, this was viewed favourably by schools. One school was positive about the school's responsibility being only for the delivery of the VCE and felt that made this easier to implement within the timetable. However, there was concern that, as the program was dependent on students being selected by an industry, this would only give these options to more capable students; thus NAP would not be a real option for those who needed an alternative program in order to stay in school.

4.3 Limitations and hurdles

All schools interviewed found that they had spent a large amount of time and resources in trying to develop VET programs at years 11 and 12 and most of the schools felt that the time and resources spent had been greater than the benefits in terms of uptake by the students.

While some schools interviewed have increased their VET enrolments in 1998, there has been an overall decrease in the number of students enrolled in VET courses in the Northern Region from 1090 students in 1997 to 941 student in 1998. At the same time there has been an increase in the number of VET courses offered, with schools delivering programs in 11 industry areas in 1997 increasing to 17 industry areas in 1998. The number of schools delivering VET has increased from 32 in 1997 to 33 in 1998. Some of the overall decrease may be accounted for by individual courses that were projected, and then not running due to insufficient student numbers to be economically viable.

Has the increase in number of courses meant that student numbers are being spread more thinly, and thus minimum class numbers are not being met?

4.3.1 Parental perceptions

There is some anecdotal evidence that parents have negative perceptions of VET as a pathway to further education, possibly as a result of their own negative experience of restructuring of the manufacturing sector (Doherty and Rice, 1998). From the interviews, there was more of a perception that parents did not really understand what VET was. They could come to information

nights and understand about VCE, but they had not come to grips with VET. The constant changes to VET structures, the cost in some cases and the travel that students would have to take to reach a TAFE college, were seen as contributing negative factors.

The New Apprenticeship Program was held to have a positive response from parents because they understood the word 'apprenticeship'. For some parents there is a perception that they want their children to better themselves: to become white collar workers. With Universities now offering courses to students with such a wide range of TER scores this may now be a realistic option and further work against take-up of VET.

Some of the schools acknowledged that they needed to do more to promote the successes of VET. The success of particular students in gaining employment or further traineeships could be promoted in the school community through newsletters and through awarding certificates. One school featured positive student comments and descriptions about both VCE and VET subjects within their VCE handbook, but even these did not establish a clear link to achievement of further outcomes. When there was parental understanding of the success of particular programs in providing job opportunities for students (eg through the Year 11 work program at Epping SC) there was a positive response from parents.

4.3.2 Teachers

There was a divide in many school between those teachers who acknowledge and promote VET as being a valuable pathway for all students in the school and those teachers who see VET as being primarily for 'at risk' students who will not complete their VCE. These teachers are more likely to believe that an 'academic' VCE and a higher education pathway should be the major focus for years 11 and 12. There was felt to be a lack of parity of esteem expressed by teachers between general and vocational education (Doherty and Rice, 1998).

For VET developments to be successful in a school, there needs to be support and understanding of VET both from the leadership team (including the Principal) and from teachers in the school.

Teachers also mentioned other practical barriers to the uptake and acceptance of VET.

Travel to TAFE was mentioned as a significant factor by some schools. The school that had the facilities and the staffing to provide the courses on site had found that development and promotion of the courses had been more successful.

Schools were also concerned that TAFE institutes did not have the same 'duty of care' for their students that they did. One school found out that a student had not been attending TAFE for the past five weeks. The school has now arranged with the TAFE College to send them the attendance sheets at the end of each week so that non-attendance can be quickly followed up. With a difference in expectations, this basic issue for school had not been an issue for the TAFE College.

4.4 Gender issues

Teese et al (1995) has linked gender disadvantage to socio-economic status: "Students from better off or better educated households are least affected by gender disadvantage in curriculum choice and schooling outcomes." That is, the gender gap widens as socio-economic status lowers. This focuses attention on which girls and which boys are more disadvantaged rather than on girls as a group or on boys as a group.

There are various efforts by schools to address these gender issues, eg at one large Secondary College, all the girls do Automotive in year 10 and all the boys do Home Economics. Another school had introduced basic car maintenance at year 10 and some of the girls considered this was a useful subject. However there are still very strong gender patterns in the VCE and VET courses as soon as these subjects become optional.

The figures for VET enrolments for the state reflect traditional gender divisions. While 97% of Automotive enrolments are boys, only 17% of Office and Administration enrolments are boys. The enrolments for IT and Hospitality are far more evenly divided between boys and girls (Reported in *The Age*, 3/10/98).

VET figures for Pascoe Vale Girls Secondary College (with 1300 students) are interesting in this regard. While the school has the highest VET enrolments for the region, with around four times the number of students of most of the other schools in the region, there are only two courses offered: Office and Administration,

and Hospitality. To what extent does the success of the school in offering such VET courses simply reflect a traditional gender divide that would have previously been present in the school's subjects of Typing, Book-keeping and Home Economics?

5. Gaps: Who's Missing Out?

5.1 Alienation of Young People from Schooling

Many studies have investigated the factors that contribute to the young people being 'at risk' of leaving school. Holden and Dwyer (1992) cite the unsatisfactory nature of school culture itself as being a major factor. School culture is characterised by three distinct elements that contribute to the alienation of some young people. These are:

- a non-stimulating environment that has no discernable relation to the wider community or the adult world to which the young person is beginning to gain access;
- lack of support and referral to appropriate agencies for young people who are experiencing problems in their personal and academic life;
- negative teacher/student relationships that are propped up by rules and regulations that disallow young people from expressing themselves as adult and responsible members of the community (Dwyer, Stokes, Tyler and Holdsworth, 1998).

The second of these elements is now well recognised and some support is being given by State Government initiatives to address this, but the first and third elements are often put in the 'too hard basket' for many schools.

5.2 Targeting of programs - for whom? - Implications

The majority of schools interviewed did not target VET towards a particular group of students. Students self selected into VET programs or showed interest in them and then were counselled as to the implications of a particular program and how to make particular subject selections for the selected program. The students interviewed who had selected VET were motivated and had a definite career path in mind. The VET course is regarded (by those teachers who are aware of the content and obligations) as a course that

requires commitment and is not seen as an option for those struggling or lacking motivation at school.

It appeared that there were two 'mainstreams' developing in some schools, one from a generalist approach and one from a vocationalist approach, each of which required high commitment and motivation to study. The majority of the group of students that had previously not been catered for by the generalist mainstream structure and curriculum of the school were still not being catered for by either of these streams. This is seen as a problem for the Northern Region where a significant proportion of students are seen to fit into this category.

In a similar regard, a few teachers and principals raised the broader issue of the perceived lack of flexibility of the VCE in maintaining students at school. They felt that the STC Course had offered this flexibility but that the current VCE did not. It was also felt that the VCE could be interpreted in a more flexible way, but that teachers were not doing this. For example, when a student had poor literacy skills, teachers were not looking at other media to allow the student to meet the work requirements. In some schools, this had been addressed at other levels with a reduction in the number of work requirements.

At another school, the Principal mentioned the need for there to be a change in teachers' mindsets: they needed to build in success rather than failure; students needed to be allowed to repeat competencies until they succeeded. The need to maintain students in some way meant that schools are looking at a range of options that do not necessarily fit within a program. The Principal does not allow coordinators to advise students to leave unless the Principal is notified. This ensures that, if possible, another arrangement is made that will allow the student to maintain some sort of contact with the school, by either completing work at home or only coming to school on the VET day.

The programs being developed in the Northern Region to cater for those not succeeding or 'at risk' of not continuing in school, all involve the students at year 10 and 11 being withdrawn

from mainstream classes. They are put into programs that are based on a team structure with a small group of teachers, have an integrated curriculum that is related to 'real life' experiences (eg enterprise learning), and involve some form of work placement. Reg Poole (NACC) has questioned why there is not a flexible framework in schools with a variety of options from year 7 onwards that would allow all students to achieve and gain such vocational skills and life skills as part of the life-long educational process. An example of this could be 'Earn and Learn', the integrated curriculum program for year 7 (outlined in Models 7.4).

Andy Moffat from The Grange P-12 College discusses briefly the tension that exists in many schools in regard to meeting the expectations of educational systems about student outcomes and meeting the actual needs, interests and aspirations of young people and their families:

"There is a critical tension between the development of, on the one hand, an organic, inclusive, integrated, negotiated curriculum as a basis for including all student participants in their work and, on the other hand, a fragmented, outcomes based, linear curriculum. The tension relates fundamentally to the critical discourse within a school about its pedagogy and its willingness to revision and restructure from this critical base." (Kemmis, 1998)

6. Areas for Action

Schools will have interest and capacity to review their vocational education program and to initiate changes in different ways and in different areas. The Audit attached to this paper is meant to provide a tool for developing debate and discussion, and for prioritising some of the issues.

Various commentators have identified five broad focus areas for curriculum development within schools. These are based largely on the work of the National Schools Network, which has particularly highlighted the importance of structural issues involved in curriculum development.

6.1 The organisation of teachers' work

Schools will need to review formal structures of the school which define the teacher groupings and allotments. That will include consideration of:

- how teachers work together as teams within a school to facilitate learning;
- examples of subschooling;
- whether teachers teach a number of subjects or specialise.

Examples exist within the region in the forms of horizontal and vertical subschools that limit the number of core teachers that students encounter. Other models include the Team Small Groups approach in operation at The Grange and Eumemmering Secondary College (see later), but could also encompass different and flexible ways of grouping students (eg large instructional groups with several teachers, smaller tutorial groups etc).

Such approaches can provide the basis for community based learning, authentic learning projects by enhancing student-teacher negotiation, providing for flexible movement of students etc.

6.2 The organisation of students' work

Similarly, how students work within classes has direct relevance to issues of community and work investigations. The key competencies suggest a priority on teamwork and classroom structures can either enhance or limit this. This includes:

- how students are grouped within classrooms;
- whether students work individually or as members of groups;
- how groups are supported to develop and learn.

The experience of table groups in many schools points out the importance of experience and understanding of group processes. The recently advertised Student Action Teams and many other community research, media, and action initiatives enable students to work as groups on issues of relevance and importance to them.

6.3 The organisation of content

Schools will need to examine the organisation of what is taught, including consideration of issues such as:

- how subject matter is organised, both between subjects and within subjects ie 'general studies', 'integrated studies', 'theme studies' or subject disciplines; content links horizontally and vertically;
- how schools respond to demands for coverage of more content - the 'crowded curriculum';
- how schools respond to the holistic or welfare needs of students.

Continuity of approaches from primary school to year 7 have encouraged some schools to integrate subject matter in the junior school, while there have

been long-standing examples of thematic studies at all levels.

6.4 Decision-making about content and process

As important as what is taught is the process by which those decisions are made. Both the VCE and the CSF place constraints on totally open decision-making processes, but leave large scope for discussion and decision around learning methods and assessment.

Such decision-making might include:

- who and how decisions are made on:
 - what is taught;
 - how it is taught;
 - how it is assessed;
- student feedback on teaching approaches;
- formal negotiation approaches.

The encouragement for students to form both topics that have importance to them, and approaches through which they learn, has been at the core of approaches used within STC and in the negotiated curriculum methods suggested by James Beane. It is important to note that these examples provide clear guidelines as to how students are challenged in negotiating content and process.

6.5 Decision-making about purpose

Much of the discussion about decision making concentrates on content and process and ignores purpose. It is even more important that there is wider engagement (certainly amongst learners, but possibly also amongst community members, including industry) around the purpose of learning.

This would include:

- decisions about the reason for learning;
- authentic learning and assessment;
- the creation of real roles of value for young people.

Examples are drawn mainly from the student participation and 'authentic assessment' literature and practice. In particular, the US-based Foxfire Project formulated processes that required a 'three way test of value' in which curriculum initiatives and projects had to be valuable (chosen by) the students, had to have value in the community (outside the classroom), and had to have academic value (meet or exceed the goals of the mandated curriculum). These were not tests simply applied by the teacher, but rather were requirements on students in proposing and negotiating a learning project.

These five areas then form platforms for school action. It is probable that schools and their communities, in formulating their whole school approach to vocational education, will need to build on more than one of the sites.

7. Some Models

7.1 VET Approaches in Senior Education

(i) VET Focused School

Schools have made a commitment to develop a whole school focus around VET courses, specifically within the VCE. This is more easily developed within a Senior College, but also has happened within some 7-12 Colleges. Some examples are:

- Box Hill Senior Secondary College: 650 VCE students. Around 360 students are taking VET programs in years 11 and 12. The school offers a wide range of VET courses including Sport and Recreation, Electronics, Engineering, Horticulture, Hospitality, Music, Clothing, Building, Automotive and Desktop Publishing. There are also around 25 year 10 students who are doing their VCE over three years, and who are taking preparatory modules of the VET courses, along with Industry and Enterprise. These options specifically exist to retain students at the school in years 11 and 12.

The school has a strong program approach to the VET and VCE courses. VET programs are not seen as 'add on' but as enhancing what is happening in the school. There is a strong teacher commitment to the VET programs and work placement is strongly encouraged in VET courses and certain VCE courses where appropriate.

- Whittlesea Secondary College: There are 107 students enrolled in VET in four industry areas, including Automotive, Engineering, Hospitality and Information Technology (IT). Automotive, Hospitality and Information Technology have much larger enrolments than Engineering.

(ii) Cooperative Delivery of VET, 1999

Schools work closely together to offer coordinated VET in Schools programs with local specialisations and student movements between sites. Such arrangements are becoming more common in country areas; schools with small enrolments can offer larger numbers of courses. In some areas, organisational and 'ownership' issues have limited possible arrangements.

Five local schools (Lakeside Secondary College, Merrilands P-12 College, Northland SC, Reservoir District SC, and Thornbury Darebin SC) are involved in the Darebin Consortium and have worked together to offer VET in Schools programs on a cooperative basis. Seven of the courses will be offered at Thornbury Darebin SC, four at Reservoir District SC and Northland SC, and one each at Merrilands College and Lakeside SC.

Benefits include a wider range of VET in School courses (for example Lakeside SC, which previously has had no VET enrolments for 1998, will offer 13 VET courses, all of which, except for IT, will be located at another school), more viable class sizes due to combining students from the five schools, and decreased costs. No instruction costs exist for most of the courses. Retail, Hospitality and Automotive will have TAFE modules with some costs involved (possibly \$1200 if there is no Department of Education subsidy).

All schools have organised their timetables so that the VET courses will be available to students from all the schools involved. There still remains the question of transport for students from one campus to another. In Shepparton's VET Cluster, where several schools cooperate in delivery of courses, there is a bus that collects students from schools to bring them to one school site, though in this cluster, the majority of the VET course delivery occurs on one school site.

(iii) New Apprenticeship Program

The New Apprenticeship Program (NAP) has a greater focus on the work placement. In studies being conducted in other regions, it appears that such programs have greatest success when students are able to 'convert' existing part-time work arrangements into work placements as part of this course. Students typically complete a full VCE load, with some adjustments for work commitments (leaving school early, using common days without timetabled classes), and undertake training either through TAFE or community providers in evenings or in vacations.

Students tend to regard their work placements as 'real jobs' in which they are treated (and regard themselves) as employees rather than as on work placement. Some of this positive attitude is seen to move back into classrooms with renewed commitment to completion of VCE qualifications. However it has been remarked that New Apprenticeships are most successful with students with high motivation and commitment (even if not having a history of school success).

Organisationally, New Apprenticeship Program models have grown from community-based partnerships between schools, training institutions and employers. It has been valuable to see these programs in terms of students determining appropriate mixes of work, training and school to meet their current and future needs. These community partnerships are then in the position of 'community brokers', advocating for the interests of individual students.

7.2 Industry Initiated and Resourced Programs

(i) Kingston (South Australia) and the Fishing Industry

The South Australian Fishing and Seafood Industry Training Council (FSITC, based in Port Adelaide), in conjunction with the SA Education Department, has initiated a Fishing

Industries Pathways program. ASTF provided \$96,000 to set up the program.

The Fishing Industries Pathways Program is a constructive industry effort to ensure that a pool of skilled people will be available for employment, particularly as sections of the fishing industry expand and grow. The aim of the program is to establish a careers pathway for secondary students and to enable the industry to deliver relevant training to students who will be the future of the fishing industry.

Six schools were approached to participate in the program. As the industry has resourced, initiated and managed the program, only a limited number of schools were selected, in order to maintain standards and allow for appropriate resourcing and management, as well as to ensure that there were enough on-going work places for students to go to at the end of the program. The program is centrally monitored by the FSITC who have established a statewide management and coordination committee to steer the course.

The industry has resourced and developed the logbooks that are used for the work placement. The teachers are flown to the Australian Fisheries Academy at Port Adelaide for regular training courses. Industry members involved in work placement attend training at the local school to have the course and their role in training students in the workplace explained to them.

Training delivered at the school involves a combination of school delivered modules (welding and fabrication), local industry (fishermen) delivered modules (ropes and knots), St John's Ambulance delivered first aid and State industry delivered modules, delivered at the school by the Australian Fisheries Academy (ship board safety, radio telephony).

Teachers felt the success of the program related to the level of resourcing, support and training provided by the Industry Board.

(ii) **Whittlesea and the Furniture Construction Industry**

Due to an employment shortage of young people which is affecting the ability of the furniture companies to fill orders and expand, the Furniture Construction Industry has approached Whittlesea SC to be involved in an industry program that will provide a pathway to the industry. As there is no VET course for this area, the industry is still in the process of trying to negotiate a possible program with the school and the Region. As yet there is no funding to resource and support the program.

7.3 Enterprise Education

(i) **Whole School Curriculum Change:
Salisbury High School, SA**

"The integration of vocational and general education in an enterprise classroom methodology which produced clearly understood pathways to employment, training and education was the impetus Salisbury High School was looking for to make the difference for its students and support their move from welfare dependency to creating a future for themselves. The school program now stimulates students to put their own ideas into practice, make real decisions, assess risk and accept responsibility for achieving their own success.

"Teachers' roles now include the brokerage of authentic learning experiences in real life situations which contain potential for students to link post secondary activities and networks, be they entrepreneurial, educational or artistic.

"As part of authentic learning, students learn the importance of presentation, service, quality and punctuality - skills they need in the market place. They run their own enterprises, learn self management and how to develop their ideas and to improve their communication and team skills. Students work with business mentors who help them design a business plan

and marketing strategy and deal with the problems associated in running a small business. A year 9 group developed its own business with the help of a local florist. They were taught how to arrange and care for flowers, make flower pots and then promote and sell them. Other enterprises included car wash and maintenance, manufacture of pavers, creation of computer programs and arts event managing.

"Educators can notice and respond to students' talents, abilities and interests because the curriculum constantly emerges around these inputs." (Turner, Mulraney and Hyde, 1998)

(ii) **Local Government/Schools Consortium, Darebin**

Around 18 months ago a group of Principals in the Darebin area started meeting, with a view to the consolidation of links between local government, TAFE, Latrobe University, service agencies and local employers. Previously there had been a lack of communication between all these sectors in the provision of services to young people, and this had resulted in service overlap and inefficiencies. After a number of meetings that built trust between the participants, the Consortium has begun to work cooperatively on a number of ventures. The first of these was a compendium of youth services undertaken and updated by the City of Darebin. Secondly, the cooperative delivery of VET was developed by the Consortium. Thirdly, Thornbury Darebin SC has allocated a room at the school that houses a worker from Northcote Community Health Centre once a week. However, one of the largest projects undertaken so far is the development of the Full Service Schools Program. This will involve:

- The cooperative development of online screening and diagnostic services for students at risk;
- The development of online literacy and numeracy programs;
- Outreach activity programs with a coordinator across five schools;

- The development of an enterprise incubator for young people that will involve the City of Darebin and the Melbourne City Mission;
- Shop front learning centres.

It may be worthwhile for the Consortium to consider linking with the adult education sector (Northlands SC has had links with PRACE) for the development of the Full Service School proposal. The ACE sector has experience in re-engaging young people in education through the provision of programs that have an outcome that the young people want, for example gaining their learners certificate. The ACE sector has identified that young people in general do not respond to programs labeled literacy and numeracy, and that the provision of literacy and numeracy has to be part of a course that the young people want to attend. Another example of this is the Handbrake Turn program in South Dandenong that teaches literacy, numeracy and social responsibility through an automotive program.

The Whittlesea and Moreland areas are also trying to develop links between schools, local government, employers, and local agencies. In Moreland, the City's Chief Executive Officer is pro-active with schools and the Youth Development Officer is involved with particular schools in attempting to develop courses between these schools and local government.

7.4 Integrating Vocational Learning into 7-12 Curriculum/Structure

In considering the development of generalist and vocationalist approaches, the issue was previously raised of the need to expand work education across all areas of the 7-12 curriculum and ways in which this would link into the structure of the school. The following two examples address some aspects of integration of work education into the curriculum and school structures.

(i) 'Earn and Learn', an integrated approach to Enterprise Education at year 7

In year 7 at The Grange P-12 College (1997), the students were involved in "The Earn and Learn" program. The program was based on the focus question the students had devised, that informed an integrated program in Maths, English and SOSE. This question was "Will I get a Job?" The outcome of this was an enterprise program that involved the students making and selling soup to the teachers one lunchtime a week. One of the parents (the local green grocer) donated left-over vegetables to the program. It expanded, with the help of parents, into making and selling hot lunches to the teachers. Another parent (a chef) helped with large quantity lasagna making. All these activities were then linked into the curriculum in the three learning areas. The program culminated in a business awards lunch that the students offered for their parents. The students used the money earned from the enterprises to pay for their school camp and other activities at the end of the year.

To make the program viable in the classroom there had to be timetable support. Maths and English had to be timetabled together for two year 7 classes; these classes had to be given a double classroom to support team teaching. There was also involvement from student teachers from the Melton campus of VUT who did their teaching rounds at the school for two days a week over a term.

The student teachers wrote up the program in this way:

"The program caters for individual difference through the use of cooperative group work, gender equity and parent involvement.

"The aims of the program were:

- For students to acquire vital skills for now and the future while enjoying themselves;

- To make the connections between value and money in real life situations;
- Enhance cooperation and group work;
- Enhance active not passive learning;
- Solve real life problems.

The teacher acts as a facilitator rather than leader." (Fulton, Frichot, Taylor, 1997)

(see appendix 3 for program outline and CSF outcomes.)

(ii) Team Small Group (TSG)

The Grange and Eumemmerring SC have each developed a model of teaching and learning which is called Teams Small Group (TSG). A German model of the same name inspired it. The rationale behind this model of learning is that teachers and students learn and work better in small groups over sustained periods of time. In practical terms this means teams of no more than 75 students and teaching teams of approximately 5-6 teachers. These teams are organised horizontally and teachers stay with their students for a minimum of three years. Most teachers teach between 65% and 95% of their time within the one team.

Students are organised in table groups of between 4 and 6 students. Table groups are formed in year 7 through a careful consideration of the following factors: gender, information from feeder schools and careful observation of the cohort. These table groups are supported through 'teething' difficulties and, rather than restructuring teams that have difficulties, are encouraged to work things out. Usually by the end of term 1, table groups have become stable structures. At The Grange, the table group structure will soon move into year 5 (the school is a P-12 College). In years 7-9, teachers are required to think of themselves as extended specialists. Increasingly teachers collaborate across the KLAS to form

integrated units of work responsive to the needs of their students.

Teachers also have a strong pastoral care role through their extended relationship with the students over a three-year period. Because of efficient use of time allocation (there are no time allowance, just money payments for special duties and leading teachers) teachers have built into their allotments time to spend on student welfare activities that would previously have been undertaken by the student welfare coordinator.

(iii) Student Tracking Research

One of the issues coming through the interviews is that schools do not have the time or resources to track students who have left school early. There is also little tracking done of students once they have made their initial decision after the end of year 12. One way to develop time and resources in this area as well as give students a sense of what other students have done would be to have a year 10 program in SOSE where the students do the tracking of past students. In the suggested program, year 10 students would follow a cohort (perhaps one to two years ahead of them) to find out:

- destinations of early school leavers;
- immediate destinations;
- destinations one to two years on;
- implications for themselves and the school.

7.5 Partial or targeted programs: for 'at risk' students

(i) Whittlesea Enterprise Program

In 1999, Whittlesea SC will be running an enterprise education program for those students regarded as being 'at risk' of leaving school throughout year 10. There will be a cohort of approximately 20-25 students. The school will devise a special TAFE course with the assistance of Northern TAFE to cater for these students. The course will be outcomes based and will use practical skills with the aim to

make school so exciting that the students will actively want to attend. A team of specially selected teachers will teach a combination of English, Maths (both with TAFE modules) Business Management, and Agriculture. The course will involve the students in running their own enterprise (eg growing chamomile).

(ii) Epping Vocational Preparation Program (VPP) year 11

This program is offered to students who have completed year 10. The purpose of the program is to provide a relevant and achievable program for students who have experienced difficulty with their schooling in year 10 and also to enhance students' job opportunities.

Students are counseled and undergo interviews involving parents, students and relevant teachers. Students have to show a real commitment and sign a work and behaviour contract.

The program involves English, general maths, metalwork, woodwork, graphics and one other subject. The content of these subjects will be modified to include TAFE apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship module material where possible.

Student will undertake a work placement one day a week in line with their interests.

As a result of this program, it is hoped that students will be in a stronger position to secure full time employment or continue on to year 12.

(iii) Reservoir District Year 11 School-Work Program

Targeted at 'at risk of leaving' students, the students work as a group doing English, Industry and Enterprise, Information Technology, Technical Studies and two other choices. This has been a successful program for retaining students.

(iv) Box Forest, Pathways Program Year 10

This is a new program targeted at 'at risk' year 9 students to retain them throughout year 10 with the aim of then getting them into VCE, TAFE or employment. The program will be competency based, with four days at school and one day a week work placement.

8. Deciding on Priorities for Action

The following is an Audit Tool for use in discussions within school communities. The purpose of this tool is to support reflection about possible directions for school development.

The Audit asks schools to examine their current practice in three broad areas:

- Classroom teaching and learning
- School ethos and environment (policies and programs)
- Community linkages

It provides statements and questions that relate to perceptions of the adequacy of current practices, and whether areas need further work.

Though it would be valuable for individuals to complete this Audit initially, the principal benefit will be gained from a leadership or core team in the school completing the document together. There are no individual right or wrong answers: the group's reflection on each section, in prioritising action, is the most important outcome.

It may also be valuable to use a variation of the Audit (a shorter version is suggested) in other school contexts, for example with parents, students, the whole staff, community members, the School Council. Here it can be both a data-gathering tool, and a vehicle for initiation of broader reflection around vocational education.

School Name: _____

Names of project team members and positions within the school:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

School policies and practices

Policies are regulations, principles, expectations and or rules which shape and encourage the school environment and behaviour. Some policies are explicitly orientated around vocational education, while others are less direct and can be extended or interpreted to include vocational education.

Practices are the various ways in which policies are implemented. They are frequently used as a measure of the effectiveness of policy.

The set of statements below, relate to a variety of school policies which can impact on vocational education in a range of ways. Please indicate whether or not your school has a policy in these areas. If you answer "yes", please indicate if review of the policy is needed

Does the school have a policy:	Yes	No	Needs Review
• that explicitly includes vocational education in the School Charter	☐	☐	☐
• on part-time work and part-time school	☐	☐	☐
• on tracking students' destinations beyond school	☐	☐	☐
• on provision of work experience	☐	☐	☐
• on equal opportunities or equal access to curriculum and resources (gender, disability etc)	☐	☐	☐

Please tick how often the following practices occur in your school.

Practice	Occurrence			
	Always			Never
Girls and boys have equitable access to school resources such as teacher time, counsellors, leadership opportunity and physical resources.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students are encouraged to develop school-based enterprises.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vocational education subjects are available to all students.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vocational education is available to all students at little or no cost.	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is possible for students to have part-time jobs.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students' part-time job experiences are integrated with their other studies.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The school provides trained careers advice personnel and information.	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Always		Never	
The school adequately addresses issues of continuing education in the transition from primary to post primary school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promoting students' vocational education is a continuing priority aspect of the school's management or strategic plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐
All staff have a clear understanding of vocational education possibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Reflecting on our answers to the questions concerning school policies and practices, priorities for action could include (identify up to five):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Curriculum, teaching and learning

The curriculum refers to both the formal teaching and learning program in the school and the informal curriculum component (or extra curricular component). These provide students and others with an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills, and to develop attitudes and understanding to enable them to become more autonomous and responsible in individual, community and employment matters.

Tick the box which indicates how satisfied you are with the current practice in your school.

Practice	Very satisfied		Very unsatisfied	
The school has a comprehensive vocational/work education curriculum for all students (either as a separate subject or integrated into other subjects).	☐	☐	☐	☐
The vocational education content acknowledges cultural diversity in attitudes to work and training.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The vocational education curriculum provides opportunities for students to learn about diversity.	☐	☐	☐	☐
A vision and rationale for the inclusion of vocational education in the curriculum is clearly stated, and shared by most staff.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The vocational education curriculum is modified to meet the needs of students with special learning needs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sufficient time per week is allocated to vocational education in the overall school curriculum.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers are supported by receiving information about the availability and use of vocational education resources.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers are encouraged to attend professional development programs relevant to vocational education.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers are encouraged to attend professional development programs relevant to enterprise education.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students with special learning needs are identified and supported appropriately.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consultation occurs with parents when addressing issues of vocational education.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Work experience is well integrated with other curriculum initiatives.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Practice	Very satisfied		Very unsatisfied	
All subject areas enable students to learn about and reflect on vocational and work-oriented issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vocational education subject areas enable and encourage students to reflect on personal and community issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐
All students have clear aims for outcomes of their work experience/placement.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Time is allocated for students to reflect on outcomes of work experience/placements.	☐	☐	☐	☐
A broad range of vocational education subjects is available.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Classroom-based careers education is included within the curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tick the box which indicates your level of satisfaction with the current coverage of the following areas which have relevance to vocational education.

Students gain a basic understanding, relevant to their age and culture, of:	Very satisfied		Very unsatisfied		Not covered
• place of work in our society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• role of unions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• needs of industry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• qualifications needed for different employment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• training required for specific careers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• entry requirements for University	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• entry requirements for TAFE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• rights and responsibilities in the workplace	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• local community resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tick the box which indicates your level of satisfaction with the opportunities provided for students to acquire skills that contribute to vocational education.

Skills	Very satisfied		Very unsatisfied	Not covered
• communicating ideas and information	☐	☐	☐	☐
• decision making/problem solving	☐	☐	☐	☐
• help seeking	☐	☐	☐	☐
• non violent conflict resolution	☐	☐	☐	☐
• stress management	☐	☐	☐	☐
• developing and maintaining social relationships	☐	☐	☐	☐
• esteem building/assertiveness	☐	☐	☐	☐
• collecting, analysing and organising information	☐	☐	☐	☐
• planning and organising activities	☐	☐	☐	☐
• working with others in teams	☐	☐	☐	☐
• using technology	☐	☐	☐	☐

CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING

Reflecting on our answers to the questions concerning curriculum, teaching and learning, priorities for action could include (identify up to five):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

School organisation, ethos and environment

The next set of statements refers to the organisation, ethos and physical environment of your school. School ethos refers to the mode or tone of a school, demonstrated in the values espoused, the expectations and relationships among its members, and the general experience of being part of the school community. This includes the psychosocial environment, and the quality of relationships among and between staff, students and families, seen in the context of policies and actions that are designed to enhance vocational education. The physical environment refers to the resources, buildings and grounds of or available to the school.

Tick the box which indicates how satisfied you are with the current situation in your school.

Practice	Very satisfied		Very unsatisfied	
The physical facilities of the school facilitate and contribute to vocational education.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Careers information is readily available for individual students.	☐	☐	☐	☐
A wide range of career/work models is available within the school community.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Involvement of community members is welcomed within the school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
There are adequate resources for required subject areas.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students' access to community resources is facilitated.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers regard both University and TAFE as appropriate further education options for students.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers are concerned with ensuring the best possible post-school options for students.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers are supportive of, and respectful towards, students.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students are encouraged to participate in school decision-making processes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students are encouraged to be active participants in the learning process.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teaching and learning processes use appropriate community resources.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Positive vocational learning experiences for all students are promoted.	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Very satisfied		Very unsatisfied	
Opportunities are provided for students to experience success in a variety of ways.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Positive academic experience for all students is promoted.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students feel a sense of belonging to the school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The school reflects the cultural values of the school community.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students with special learning needs are identified and supported appropriately.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students are discouraged from leaving school before completing year 12.	☐	☐	☐	☐

SCHOOL ORGANISATION, ETHOS AND ENVIRONMENT

Reflecting on our answers to the questions concerning school organisation, ethos and environment, priorities for action could include (identify up to five):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Partnerships and services

Schools can develop partnerships with industry agencies that address vocational education issues in order to gather resources and expertise or for the provision of services.

Schools also develop partnerships with their local communities. These are the connections between the school and the students' families as well as the connection between the school and key local groups and organisations which support and promote vocational education.

Thirdly, schools can develop partnerships with other educational institutions, both with neighbouring schools (to share resources) and with TAFE and University.

*The set of statements below, relates to a variety of interactions between the school and its community. Please indicate whether or not your school is active in these areas.
If you answer "yes", please indicate if review of current activity is needed.*

Practice	Yes	No	Needs review
There is regular interchange of information between families, the local community and the school about vocational education.	☐	☐	☐
Resources are shared between school and community.	☐	☐	☐
A broad range of parents is actively involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school.	☐	☐	☐
The curriculum contains vocational education activities that involve students interacting with their families or carers.	☐	☐	☐
Local groups participate collaboratively in school activities.	☐	☐	☐
Parents are encouraged to be involved in decision making and policy development within the school	☐	☐	☐
Local vocationally-related services are accessed for counselling and referral.	☐	☐	☐
Formal advisory links are established with local employers.	☐	☐	☐
There are adequate community services to meet students' vocational needs.	☐	☐	☐
There are specific vocational services for students who are 'at risk'.	☐	☐	☐
There is consultation between appropriate community and industry sector personnel and teachers about the design and implementation of the vocational education curriculum.	☐	☐	☐
Community and industry experts complement the work of teachers by participating in the delivery of relevant aspects of the curriculum.	☐	☐	☐
Neighbouring schools work together to maximise the vocational education curriculum available to students.	☐	☐	☐

Practice	Yes	No	Needs review
The school works with Local Government and other bodies around job/work creation.	☐	☐	☐
Parental vocational skills and experiences contribute to the school's program.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate whether or not referral procedures are in place for the following and, if so, whether review is needed.

The school has procedures in place for the identification and referral of students with specific vocational needs around:	Yes	No	Needs review
• truancy, school refusal and repeated absenteeism	☐	☐	☐
• youth unemployment	☐	☐	☐
• behaviour problems	☐	☐	☐
• long-term family unemployment	☐	☐	☐
• learning difficulties	☐	☐	☐
• students' concerns about their friends	☐	☐	☐
• family financial problems	☐	☐	☐

PARTNERSHIPS AND SERVICES

Reflecting on our answers to the questions concerning our school's partnerships with the local community, priorities for action could include (identify up to five):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The following True/False statements seek your impression about the general attitude of others within your school community in relation to vocational education and how comfortable they feel in discussing these matters.

Please tick true or false for each of the following statements.

1. Vocational education is regarded as a high priority within the curriculum of this school.

T ☐ F ☐

2. Vocational education is regarded as an affordable curriculum option.

T ☐ F ☐

3. A student returning to school after work experience/placement is not penalised in their school work.

T ☐ F ☐

4. Teachers in this school believe that all subject areas should include a vocational component.

T ☐ F ☐

5. Teachers in this school believe that the curriculum is directed towards preparation for University entrance.

T ☐ F ☐

6. Some teachers and parents in this school community would believe that vocational education should be principally targeted towards those students experiencing difficulties in their academic school work.

T ☐ F ☐

7. Teachers in this school are generally satisfied with the school's curriculum offerings and balance.

T ☐ F ☐

The following space is provided for your comments regarding any issue related to vocational education in schools.

.....

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.....

.....

Thank you for your time and attention in completing the audit tool.

Appendices:

Appendix 1

Vocationalist/Generalist Comparison

	Vocationalist approach	Generalist approach
General subjects	Provides knowledge and skills required for specific further and higher learning	Development of mind for participation in social life
Vocational subjects	Provides knowledge and skills required for successful market participation	Development of critical understanding of nature, context and values of the world of work
Political orientation	Technocratic	Democratic
Main reproductive function of education	Economic regeneration.	Public participation.
Political and social values	Meritocratic (old form) Individualistic (new)	Egalitarian.
Guiding educational metaphors	Relevance, enterprise.	Participation, collaboration.
Policy exemplars	Australian National Training Agenda.	National Goals for Schooling. World of Work Curriculum Project.
Type of School	Technical/vocational schools and colleges.	Comprehensive community-based schools and programs.
School organisation	Managerial. Self-managing.	Democratic. Part of mutually supporting and participatory community networks.
Curriculum organisation	Differentiation of subjects. Grouping on the basis of vocational needs. Weak division between classroom and world of work.	Differentiation of subject matter around common activities and student negotiated needs. Weak division between classroom and community.
Curriculum knowledge	Technical knowledge and practical skills. Vocational applications. Utilitarian value. Competency based. Arbitrary standards. External syllabus management.	Critical knowledge, cultural awareness and social understanding. Negotiated standards always under reviews. Broad negotiated frameworks.
Teacher's role	Managerial, maximising and testing learning outcomes.	Coordinator, organising learning around common tasks. Rich assessment processes.
Teaching methods	Practical instruction. Self-paced.	Projects, group work, collaborative enquiry. Authentic tasks.

After: Thomson (1997) and Carr and Hartnett (1996)

Appendix 2

A Suggested Work Education Program

Currently, many of the students involved in the work experience program regard it as a 'job-sampling' exercise. As one student put it: "it's a chance to look at a job I might want to do and see if I like it." Given what we know about current work patterns and job opportunities in Australia, such a 'narrow' view of work experience is likely to be unproductive and prevent students from developing a better understanding of the personal abilities that they need to develop and the general demands of work.

If the students are to derive positive benefit from work experience beyond mere 'job-sampling', a program needs to be designed that provides them with more focused preparation and follow-up. Possible programs would look like this:

A. Year 10 Work Experience Program

Two 'induction sessions' → work placement → two 'debriefing' sessions

Induction session 1:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| a. Why work experience? | Student 'buzz groups' devise written lists of aims and expectations, then pool results. |
| b. What work experience? | Students identify and group the different placement options. |
| c. What do we expect it to be like? | Students discuss their individual expectations, and the things they think are common elements in all jobs. |
| d. What will we look for? | Teacher-led discussion of questions they should be asking themselves about the general aspects of 'work' and the specific aspects of a particular job placement. |

Homework: students to prepare a list (with reasons why) of at least five questions about work that they hope to be able to answer as a result of their work placement.

Induction session 2:

This session would be a review of the class responses to the issues raised in Session 1.

- collate student homework question answers;
- create a total list, reduce any overlap, and select a list of about 10 key questions;
- form headings for questions: eg -
 - about my feelings
 - about the work itself;
 - about the other people involved;
 - about problems.
- students prepare a list of common questions (what we all want to know) and particular questions (something extra that 'I' want to know).

Work placement: students to keep a daily diary to write up their feelings, thoughts, experiences.

De-briefing Session 1:

- sharing of particular experiences;
- describing the work activities/routine;
- reflecting on differences between what they expected and 'the reality';
- individual writing on 'what it was like' and 'what I learnt'.

De-briefing Session 2:

- pooling of information from diaries and individual writing;
- are there any common themes or patterns?
- return to the questions from Induction Session 2 - what do we know now about work?

Homework: students use their diaries, their individual writing in the previous class, and the class discussion to write their own response to: "what do we know now about work?"

B. A Year 7 to Year 12 Program

Another possibility might be to develop a much broader work education strategy beginning at the Year 7 level. It could be designed along the following lines:

1. Work Observation

In Year 7, each student would undertake to spend at least one day (or two half-days) with a relative in their workplace, observing what they do and answering a few limited questions such as:

- what's the best thing about the job?
- what's the worst thing about it?
- what types of 'skills' does the work require?

This is to be completed by the end of Term 2. If possible, class discussion could be organised in Term 3 around these issues.

In Year 8, this process could be extended to the equivalent of two days in two different jobs. The emphasis would be on comparisons between the two jobs:

- the differences in work organisation and required skills?
- the similarities between the two jobs?
- what do you need to learn at school for a career in either job?

In year 9, this could be followed up with some class interviews of people:

- someone who is self-employed;
- someone who works for someone else;
- someone who owns or manages a business.

These interviews could be done in class groups, in small groups or individually. The interview questions would be developed by the students and the results would be written up by students.

2. Self-Identity

It would be worth investigating a program of activities/discussions/questionnaire (for use at various year levels) about personal aptitudes and interests:

- Who am I?
- What am I interested in?
- What am I good at?
- What are my hobby and leisure skills?

Some of this material already exists, and some will be available through the new Key Study Area of Personal Development.

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3. *Work Knowledge*

In Years 9-10 (and probably in Years 11-12 as well), there could be specific investigative projects about particular jobs or career paths. For example, a small group could identify a particular career and be required to:

find out (through booklets etc) what the formal requirements are for entry;
interview a person or persons working in that career, about the 'pathway' into the career and the personal skills required.

This information could be stored in a 'careers bank' that other students would have access to. In fact, the classes could undertake a specific project to develop and maintain such a bank for the school, to supplement the formal information.

4. *Course Experience*

In Years 11 and 12, students could carry out a direct investigation of career training/entry requirements. This could be done at least by writing to/phoning the proposed course office for information (How do I apply? What scores do I need? What are the pre-requisites?), but could also include interviews with former students about 'what is it really like?', 'how is it different from school?' or even sitting in on a class at a tertiary institution: "do I see myself sitting here in 12 months' time?"

Much of this formal information may be already available, but the emphasis should be on students searching it out for themselves, rather than relying on others to do it for them.

Roger Holdsworth, in Dwyer, P (1993) **Preparing Students for Future Pathways**, Research Report No. 9, Youth Research Centre, Melbourne

Appendix 3

Earn and Learn

Program Outline

- Based on 4 periods per week
- This is only an outline; don't feel obliged to run the activities in the exact order they are listed below. Introduce variations or extra activities as you see the class needs them.

	SESSION ONE	SESSION TWO
WEEK ONE	1 • Brainstorming - what makes up society?	2 • Introduction to Earn and Learn - pay advice slips
WEEK TWO	3 • Employment - will I get a job?	4 (Rotation session) • Applying for jobs • Renting a house • Interview situations
WEEK THREE	5 • Resumes • Personal references	6 (Rotation session) • Insurance claims • Pay advice and tax • Bank books
WEEK FOUR	7 (Rotation session) • Credit cards • Budgeting and spending • Banking • Introduce projects	8 • Video • Community job interviews • Spelling test • Book checks • Government pay day
WEEK FIVE	9 • Writing business proposals	10 • Open bank • Rent house • Employ tax, rent, insurance agents • Government pay day
WEEK SIX	11 • Drivers licence • Job interviews • Shopping centre established	12 • First day of free trading • Pay rent, tax and insurance • Government pay day
WEEK SEVEN	13 • Preparing dinner party • Work on projects • Free trading	14 • Free trading • Government pay day
WEEK EIGHT	15 • Complete workbooks • Prepare dinner party • Re-build business • Projects due • Workbooks due • Government pay day	16 • Free trading • Dinner Party and awards

Earn and Learn

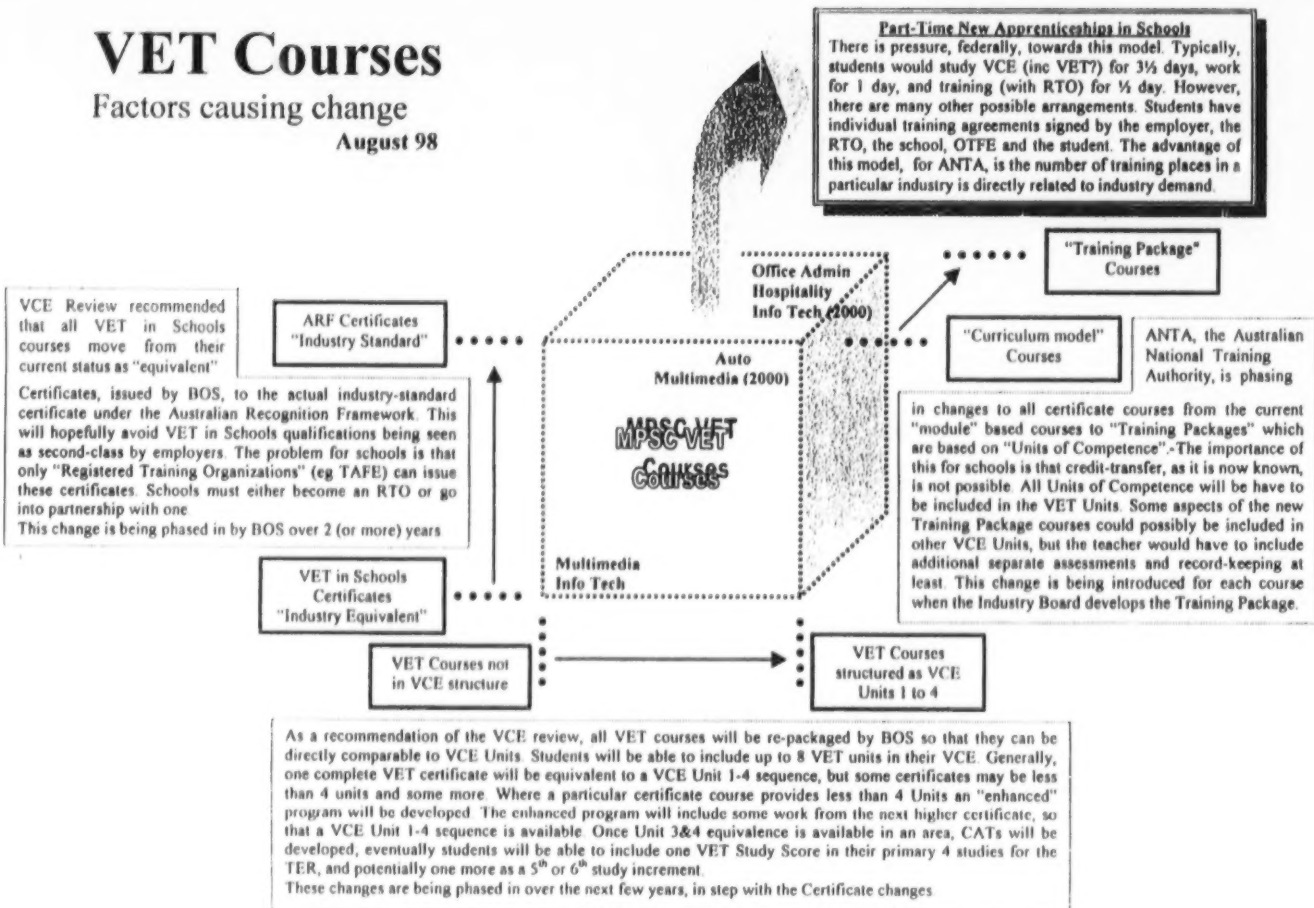
CSF LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE PROGRAM

KLA	LEVEL	LEARNING OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES
SOSE	5 Resources	Examine factors which affect opportunities for paid employment	- Location, work experience activities - Interview techniques, resumes and personal references - Look through newspaper for jobs
SOSE	4 Resources	Describe the factors that make work at home, school and in the community satisfying and effective	- Journal of working community - CES project - Understand the roles of different jobs
SOSE	4 Natural and Social Systems	Recognise how rules and laws are made	Negotiation of fines
SOSE	4 Resources	Demonstrate how information is used as a resource to make and record decisions	Planning of businesses - floor plans, job application forms, advertising
SOSE	5 Resources	Describe how resources are owned and accessed	- Bank loan application - Banking money - withdrawal and deposit slips, cheques
SOSE	5 Resources	Explain different ways of managing financial resources	- Personal budgets - Shopping lists
SOSE	4 Natural and social systems	Discuss economic decisions made by individuals and groups	- Student lists on what they need to purchase for their home and why - Place, in priority order, the things purchased for home
ENGLISH	4 Strategies (speaking and listening)	Assist and monitor the communication patterns of self and others	Develop group communication skills
ENGLISH	4 Strategies (reading)	With peers, identify information needs and find resources for specific purposes	Projects
ENGLISH	4 Strategies (writing)	Use a range of strategies, knowledge and resources when spelling	- Journal writing - Projects
ENGLISH	4 Linguistic structures and features (writing)	Control most distinguishing linguistic structures and features of basic text types such as stories, procedures, reports and arguments	- Projects - Journal writing - Job application forms - Bank loan application - Business proposal
MATHS	4 Mathematical tools and procedures (contexts for mathematics)	Further consideration of the role and impact of mathematical ideas in our community and other communities	- Purchasing objects - Banking - Paying rent, tax and insurance - Tattsлото draw

VET Courses

Factors causing change

August 98



Mill Park Secondary College:

Factors causing change in VET Courses

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Youth Research Centre

The Youth Research Centre is located within the Faculty of Education at The University of Melbourne. It was established in 1988 in response to a recognised need by the youth affairs sector for relevant and up to date research on the issues facing young people today.

The aims of the YRC are to:

- conduct relevant, coherent and reliable research on young people in Australia, with a state, national and international focus;
- assist with the development of policy and the implementation of initiatives based on research findings;
- develop strong links with the youth affairs sector, with particular attention to helping to identify and address the sector's research needs;
- facilitate communication between educators, researchers, policy makers and youth workers;
- support the research activities of university staff and post-graduate students who have a specific interest in youth affairs; and,
- enhance the professional development of staff and students by assisting them to be informed about the broader context of young people's lives.

Youth Research Centre Activities

The YRC has particular expertise in research on education, transition pathways, social justice, gender equity and employment issues as they affect young people.

The main YRC activities are:

- undertaking research and publishing the outcomes in a manner accessible to policy makers and the youth sector;
- providing information and policy advice to governments and other organisations;
- assisting and encouraging individuals or groups who work with young people.

YRC activities involve:

- undertaking small projects for groups lacking the capacity or opportunity to do so themselves;
- providing a base for post-graduate students wishing to undertake Masters or PhD research on topics related to young people and the youth sector;
- enabling academics to participate in established YRC projects, and/or undertake their own research on youth related issues;
- maintaining a youth sector resource library;
- publishing series of Working Papers and Research Reports;
- conducting public seminars and conferences on a variety of issues relevant to those working in the youth sector.

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